

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

overthrow of the Ciompij mainly through the strange desertion of their cause by Michele di Lando,¹ the chief share in the government had remained with the artisans of the minor Arts ; many of the noblest and most influential of the burghers were in exile or under bounds, no less than the lowest plebeians who had taken part in the tumults ; plots within and without the city, for the restoration of the exiles and the overthrow of the new regime, were incessant; while Cante de' Gabrielli of Gubbio (a descendant of that Messer Cante who, as Podesta, had passed sentence against Dante three-quarters of a century before), as Captain of the People for both six months of 1379, did fearful deeds of justice or injustice, beheading or hanging real or supposed traitors, torturing suspected persons to extort denunciations of their fellow-citizens. The exiles looked to the advent of Charles of Durazzo much as Dante had done to that of Henry of Luxemburg, and the prince himself was ready to lend the aid of his soldiers to restore the adherents of the Parte Guelfa to Florence.

Apparently in April, Giannozzo Sacchetti had been arrested (for debt, according to Marchionne Stefani), and cast into the prison known as the Stinche. " I understand," wrote Catherine, on May 8, to Bartolo Usimbardi and Francesco di Pippino, " that Giannozzo has been taken ; I know not how long he will stay there. I am pleased at what you, Francesco, write to me about it, that you will never abandon him, and so I command you, in the name of Jesus Christ, to visit him very often, to comfort and help him in all that you can ; think that God demands nought else of us, save that we should show upon our neighbour the love that we have for Him. I commend him earnestly to you, and tell him from me to be a good knight, now that God has put him on the field, and that his fighting must be true patience, by bowing his head with humility to the sweet will of God. Comfort him much in my name and in that of all this family,

¹ Cf. Rodolico, *op. cit.* pp. 199-206, whose researches reveal Michele's conduct in a most sinister aspect, instead of the halo of legendary glory with which he had previously been surrounded.